

Categorizing the Occult

Magickal Traditions and
Their Meaning

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**MAGICKAL TRADITIONS AND
THEIR MEANING**

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INTRODUCTION

When magick is discussed, whether by occultists or by academics, there is an innate tendency to partition the occult into groups, most commonly, according to whether the mystic intent is to harm or help; essentially, the standard being white magic, black magic, and in some cases a gray zone in between the two representing magic which is not quite holy in nature but yet causes no harm- this third group may by some be seen as representing more the christian background of Victorian and Edwardian era occultists than any true mystic or divine standard. However, little thought seems to have been given to the source of occult energy or power, merely to the intent with respects to the occultist themselves; why has this been overlooked, other than that medieval sorcerers and witches, and even their modern counterparts, were often forced to legitimize their craft to an oppressive churchgoing public that was at best wary of their motives? I suggest, here, that the occult world can only truly be represented in two ways without cheapening its actual potency.

The first is to regard the magical realm and all practices therein as interconnected and, although distinguishable from school to school, sect to sect, and craft to craft, nonetheless combined together merely under the title of mysticism without regards to the intent of the school, sect, or craft, or that of the individual who might be using such practices. The second manner of grouping the magical realm in a consistent manner, far from cries of white or "good" occultism and bad or "black magic" has to, in my mind, merely be to separate the occult based on whether the theory behind the energy and power comes from within, or from without- whether it is considered an internal force (or an external force made internal) or an external force purely, that can perhaps be called upon, manipulated, or placated, but is separate entirely from the

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occultist.

Thus I have to separate practices such as mantra, yoga, meditation, and shamanism (which are largely or exclusively internal and usually energetic practices) from practices like prayer, invocations, evocation, and so forth, which are largely or exclusively external in nature and rely on some outside force or being to be useful.

My own views on the legitimacy of these and other practices are inconsequential to the actual subject at hand, merely to properly partition them in a manner quite unlike the wildly illogical and abrahamist-tainted systems in use and popularized by later figures who either didn't want to admit they knew better, or actually didn't know better and retained christianized occult habits and thus, likely, their fear of possession and similar phenomena. It is through a proper understanding of the occult that the occult truly begins; it is a fruitless endeavor to practice unless you understand, first, the principles of the occult and its proper use- something which would be difficult with a persistent mind to abrahamic paths that themselves contain occult material yet at the same time condemn the very idea of magick through an ages-old misinterpretation of what constituted witchcraft in the first place.

WHAT IS A WITCH?

Before partitioning some of the more well known and prevalent parts of the mystic world it might first be helpful to point out that the Bible itself in its modern (and often KJV derived) version is a far cry from accurate in how it portrays the occult. Upon telling the average christian or muslim that their ritualism and prayer is in fact a form of occult congregation and that their prayers especially are a form of invocation to a deity which quite clearly smiled upon divination and superstition, the

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usual reaction is one of opposition or else confusion- this may be the result of magic being seen by even the most modern individual in much the same way it was seen during the medieval era with all of its superstition and all of its misconceptions. A modern bible does at face value appear to condemn witchcraft.

However, a more ancient look at the material shows that the Bible would have to directly contradict itself for this to be true; every old testament king and prophet was surely making use of the occult, from prophecy, to invocation, and even apocryphal tales of King Solomon binding various demons to his will in order to build the Temple at Jerusalem as attested to by non-canonical works of not much later authorship than most of the old testament itself. In reality, the biblical prohibition of witchery appears to be referencing only certain pagan medical practices and invocations to deities other than the Jewish god- a prohibition that may not have been applied to christendom at all had the early scribes handling these documents realized that the new testament clearly negates the requirement of christians to follow most OT law.

If the old testament was decrying witchcraft as it is commonly understood in its modern form, it would in fact be condemning the actions of most of the important figures therein, as well as some who would follow, with even the process of exorcism (regardless of the ritual or method used) being a form of occultism; perhaps even a special one, because it uses either internal or external occult power to destroy or remove the influence of another internal or external force, being, or sickness which is at least considered in each situation to be occult in nature. In reality, the only definition of witch in a Biblical sense has to be wildly different from what most modern occultists tainted by abrahamism consider it to be- even the less christianized groups still contain an element of bias either against or in favor of "black magic" and usually take steps to

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enforce such views. The ancient definition of prohibition can only be considered a prohibition of divination or healing done through the worshipful veneration of cosmic forces not part of the accepted Jewish pantheon of Yahweh and various angelic forces; but here even prayers to Jesus are condemned, for the Jews themselves do not recognize Jesus as their messiah (or mosiach.)

Those thus following this mindset are in a way doing themselves a disservice by thinking that some combination of divine or karmic power will grind them down if they accidentally toy with demonic forces or conduct ceremonies of a prohibited nature; I have myself found the occult is best practiced with either no rules, or else rules that are created by the occultist themselves, although adopting the rules of tolerably sensible occult schools or temples is certainly safer than going it alone for those who merely "dabble" in these forces.

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INTERNAL MAGICK

MEDITATION

Meditation seems to represent the epitome of internalized mystic power; the occultist, practitioner, adept, or whatever other title may be given, is encouraged to focus through this practice, although there appear to be numerous specific variants on meditation that should be explained here with some level of depth.

Most commonly, the individual is admonished to retreat to a quiet location, usually relaxing in a lotus posture or similar poses, and is told to empty their mind of all distractions- the ultimate goal differs from person to person and group to group. Some merely do this to relax and re-energize (a utilitarian goal) while others wish to connect with a deity, with the cosmos, to develop psychic abilities, or to heal themselves. In this standard type of meditation, no external force is required, and the individual is eventually capable of meditating fully even in a crowded, noisy area, instantly reaching a state of semi-obliviousness towards their surroundings which is good for their mind, body, and spirit.

While the jury is still out on whether meditation has proven health benefits in a physical sense, it does seem to have proven itself able to relieve anxiety and other mental strains.

In other circles, meditation may be done in a more westernized occult manner; an individual may enter a meditative, relaxed state, and then focus on an individual they wish to harm, or heal, or protect, or draw to them- they may enter the same state at other times and attempt to project their consciousness

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beyond their physical body or perform other psychic tasks or feats. Regardless of whether they are attempting to project or to affect the physical world around them, they are quite literally using nothing but their mind (and to a lesser extent their body) to affect reality; the most pure form (perhaps) of truly internal mysticism.

The central theme of any such practice is focus- focus which relies largely upon the capability of the individual to enter such a state; even in fiction this archetypal system is used (such as "the force" in Star Wars- oddly this itself has given rise to a very real Jedi religion which is vaguely Buddhist in nature!) This is purely internalized.

The only external forces at work here would be those said to be repelled by those able to enter such a state- new age movements which do much the same seem to consider the ability to control the self as essential to traveling on what they term the astral plane either through meditation itself or other practices- worries about entities in dimensions beyond the physical world run high, and a lack of self control can cause psychic harm, at least according to their own theoretical practices. The practice of meditation may be seen as the mental counterpart of yoga or tai chi, physical practices which are inseparably linked to meditation.

Meditation may also be done with the aid of chants or music of a spiritual nature, the musical group "Omenya" comes to mind, particularly their lesser-known esoteric work on Dark Meditations. However, the inclusion of music as an external force doesn't necessarily render meditation itself an exercise in external occultism because the focus remains on the mind itself.

One might think of such Eastern practices also in another way; the dissolving of the ego which holds such central

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importance in most groups that also meditate may be claimed itself as an exercise in the internal, bringing about a profound change of self, that allows the occultist or initiate to tap into their mind more fully (although, again, the jury is also out on whether the mind is directly benefited in a physical manner.) Much like the misunderstood medieval witch who was largely practicing medicinal herbalism, the meditation guru is not calling upon some sort of arcane demonic or angelic force (with the exception of the boddhisatva) but is guiding others in self control exercises.

Meditation may also be linked to sadhana practices; I have heard multiple philosophical versions of what this term actually entails, with the most authentic version seemingly the willful relinquishing of materialism for a set time period, as long as it is done conscientiously (IE without coercion.) Acharya Shree Yogesh has explained this quite well in his own teachings, in short, that walking around outside barefoot is a type of sadhana, but it would not be a sadhana if it were done unwillingly, for example in a prison, or if you were a sort of slave. Again, however, this practice itself dwells upon the denial of internal impulses and urges; a spiritual system common in the east- the process of fasting found within western groups is basically the same.

However, here the distinction lies in the reason for this ascetic practice; while the easterner is fasting to purge the mind and body of desire, the westerner is doing it to please a foreign source of occult power, namely their deity. This eastern and western divide is seen over and over again, mostly with the original eastern sources proclaiming the necessity of self control and the western groups deciding self control is impossible without an external source to threaten the individual into compliance (hellfire and brimstone, normally.) It seems such ascetic practices were adopted and altered around the time of the Roman Empire when the western, European and North African

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groups first began to encounter and do heavy trade with people in what is now Iran, Pakistan, and India. Interestingly, the inclusion of such westernized sentiments predates christianity in the Roman Empire and appears to have been a facet of several cults, notably of a Mithraic form and those venerating Sol Invictus as a solar deity.

One might come to the conclusion that had the Romans and other western groups been predominantly concerned with Hellenism or another such pagan group at the time, rather than with the Judaists, that had a new religion (as christianity did) formed it would have been radically different and probably resembled Zoroastrianism or other fusions found in the region between the Vedics and tantrics in the east and the pagans in the west. Prayer has to be considered separate from meditation even though the two share a sort of introspective focus as well, for similar reasons.

In order to meditate, it is merely necessary for the individual to focus internally whilst sitting in the proper pose- instructions are here given.

First, the occultist ought to be seated, preferably using a small cushion directly under the base of the spine, above the buttocks, which will help them maintain the proper pose; the legs will be crossed almost indian style (although Buddhist and Hindu meditation poses seem slightly different.) The back must be straight, although it cannot be rigid in nature; the pose works primarily because it is a natural position for one who is seated in this manner. The head is tilted slightly downward (which actually means it must be facing straight ahead; most individuals tilt their head back slightly throughout the day, as a force of habit, possibly due to the weight of the head, and an unconscious attempt to balance weight.) The crown of the head faces almost directly upwards, or "plumb" style, such that if a line were

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drawn from the ground directly at the center of the individuals' body, it would aim directly through the skull and directly up into the heavens.

In this pose, the arms are left out to the sides slightly, forming a bow shape, with the hands in the lap, normally with one thumb (usually the left) overlapping the other, the hands cupped loosely. Importantly, the arms must be loose to the sides, such that they are not "squashed" inwards- the armpit should be slightly open in this position.

Most people over-think the pose involved, possibly causing themselves undue mental stress and foiling their attempts to actually focus on breathing or on silence, as their mind continually goes over each body part, readjusting them in an almost obsessive manner; it is better that the pose be slightly faulty than that the mind be rendered unable to focus, as that is the point of meditation to begin with.

In this position, fully relaxed, a person must then begin to breathe- the breath is important in all forms of meditation, although the method may differ. In Hindu breathing, at times, in order to clear the mind before entering into meditation or other practices, you would forcefully exhale through the nose, and because of the force used, the lungs automatically inhale- in Buddhist practice this seems overlooked. With the eyes closed or half closed, meditation begins as the individual merely focuses on their slow breathing, attempting to forget the world around them- after some time, focus subconsciously releases and they find themselves in a very temporary state which roughly mimics nonexistence; in this state, true meditation has occurred, although it can take literally years for an individual even with the help of a learned master to achieve it; it suffices that the person should simply focus on their breath, as there will eventually come a point at which, with no conscious effort, the mind goes

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blank on its own- indeed, "trying" to do anything defeats the purposes of meditation and the mind must be relaxed enough to do it almost on its own.

A form of pseudo-meditation that I find helpful is doing the above but in a quiet place of nature, preferably when the sun is shining but while you yourself are in the shade, and focusing and quieting the mind, focusing on the minute sounds of nature; a sort of naturist, pagan style meditation of sorts. This is, however, not to be confused with the benefits and practices of "real" meditation.

YOGA AND TAI CHI

The eastern yogic system is also squarely within the realm of internalized magick- a series of stretches, often with mantras and chants and meditation practices, yet separated from meditation at large which is sometimes practiced on its own without the benefit of yoga.

It might be good here to recognize the two-sidedness of the abrahamic (and especially protestant) argument against yoga as a form of witchery; on the one hand the christians are technically correct, because yoga is indeed a form of occultism, albeit one that most would rather consider a relaxation technique (especially in western groups where the obvious mystic implications are ignored or not known by even the teacher themselves.) On the other hand, the christians get it wrong in claiming that yoga includes any form of demonic influence, because the practice itself is internal, or largely so.

The most obvious occult intrusion into the yoga debate comes in the form of the kundalini awakening or serpent fire as attested to in theosophical manuscripts mentioning the yogic system, and by ancient sources from the east as well; the most

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interesting tract mentioning the serpent fire (at least that I have physically read) is Geoffrey Hodson's work in "Clairvoyance and the Serpent Fire" within which he briefly (for the booklet itself is only about 12 pages in length) touches on the awakening of the nadis within the spinal column, releasing a psychic force of incomprehensible strength able to allow the newly awakened individual to travel out of their body at will, among other powers.

Unfortunately, Hodson, as with Blavatsky (which he also mentions in this same work as a source) has decided to create an unnecessary "Christ-consciousness" addition to it, as most occultists of the era did, in an effort to reconcile eastern and western practices, not realizing that they are separate for reasons that go beyond merely public opinion. Claimed connections between the Greek religion and kundalini practices are as-yet claimed but not proven. Even in the east, such practices have been cheapened by the Indian equivalent of megachurch preachers; members of the Brahmin class (usually) who spend several years learning about the mystic only to proclaim themselves special and which usually gain a cult following should they bastardize the eastern practices slightly and promise people more than they can reasonably deliver- I could write here several pages excoriating such "masters" but would probably fall prey to India's blasphemy laws in doing so.

In the case of actual yoga however, it is at the very least (on its own) a relaxing exercise with a great deal of benefit- in my own occult works I have tried to admonish others to learn the art of self control and focus, and even for those seeking atheistic Satanism the advice remains the same, because the practice of self control is purely necessary for anyone who wishes to truly succeed at their goals- yoga, meditation, and other practices are all good for this work, even if they are given no further importance and are relegated to a daily exercise routine.

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Tai Chi is of special significance here; I myself was a practitioner of this semi-spiritual and extremely internalized technique for half a decade.

In reality tai chi might be thought of less as a relaxing set of martial arts moves slowed down to a crawl (as it is sometimes described as) and more of a physical version of meditation; the posture, while upright, still stresses the same type of erect but "loose" bodily movements and poses, with the crown of the head facing directly upwards and the joints kept "open" at virtually all times; the slow, sweeping movements and gestures emulate various natural forces such as water or wind, and the entire time, the mind must be kept on the body itself, normally at the dantian (stomach center) but at other times the forehead or crown of the head, and rarely in the feet.

It is quite possible after some years of practice to memorize the form so well that it becomes almost an unconscious practice, after which I suppose it might be possible to do it while literally meditating; the manner of breathing in tai chi is quite similar to the same breathing techniques one might see in certain yogic practices as well. Tai chi doesn't include any external occult force at all; similar to all physical eastern practices, it has been demonized in some circles for fears about Daoist religious dogma, although in the entire time I practiced it, these things were mentioned at most on two or three occasions, with 99% of the time spent stretching and performing the long form- neither of these facets are remarkably different than what one might expect in a gymnastics seminar, sped up somewhat and requiring the same level of focus but perhaps more physical endurance (although anyone told to maintain the same pose for 30 minutes knows it's a bit more challenging than it looks to an outsider.)

In fact tai chi itself isn't even particularly mystic in

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nature; I haven't thus far seen any mention of it outside of my own literature as being connected with the occult, although I maintain that its use can amplify an existing connection to the spiritual world by many magnitudes in a manner similar to meditation and its use by some groups. Tai chi, I suggest, could be a reasonable stand-in for meditation in these circles, for those who are unable to meditate or find it particularly difficult, due to tinnitus (ringing of the ears when it is too quiet) or a general difficulty with focusing internally. The more obviously mystic Daoism itself is not necessarily a part of most tai chi practiced in the western world, nor is it necessarily present in all eastern groups; when it is present it is a potent, although strictly white-magick style path- in this way Tai chi may simultaneously function as merely a meditative focusing form, and as a philosophical path. In the latter case, where the philosophy itself is present, the practitioner will likely find themselves self-restraining their occult practices in accordance with the Tao itself.

I have not practiced yoga on my own to any particular degree; however my familiarity with tai chi will allow me to explain some of the more basic principles- those interested in learning the actual tai chi form will need to take classes on the subject, although they may be able to get a good idea and begin practicing parts of the form using only materials available on the internet.

First and foremost, within tai chi, the individual must learn never to lock the joints; in our day-to-day lives, at any time we are not in motion, we tend to, if standing, lock the knees- the human body also tends to tighten its muscles up while not in motion, which is a good way not to become unbalanced and fall over, but which also tends to strain the body and cause pain.

Before performing any part of the tai chi form stretches

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must be used; these are similar to the stretches done in any gymnastics class, but tend to be slower, looser, and sometimes more repetitive, and as before the joints are almost never locked.

Similar to meditation, the crown of the head must be facing directly up to the heavens- it is helpful if you remember to tuck your tailbone forwards underneath you to cause the posture to reorient itself; most people have a habit of locking the knees, forcing the tailbone back, and keeping their head tilted back- ideal for running around and not ideal at all for slower, more coordinated movements. However, the most important aspect of all might be the breathing method of tai chi- most individuals breathe into their chest; a shallow breath that does not completely fill the lungs; instead, tai chi admonishes to breathe into the stomach (which is not difficult, merely overlooked by most people.) The particular posture tai chi involves invites this to happen on its own and the person needs only begin the process by observing where the air is going and changing it.

This increased breathing pattern oxygenates the blood swiftly, which has a very real, well established, and quite potent affect on the ability to focus; in fact, an occultist could probably improve their own health and motivation solely through this single aspect of tai chi, but sadly most people continue to view the entirety of tai chi as stretches for those with arthritis, or a slowed down, less "cool" version of martial arts.

However, those with advanced knowledge of tai chi understand the principle of balance in a new way; it is possible for a small person with incredible balance and a knowledge of the principles of chi, to throw a far larger person across the room if necessary, all based on the principles of weightedness and coordination; this, too, in tai chi is important- in most parts of the form and most stretches, the weight is meant to be balanced perfectly on each foot, and is centered on the bridge of the feet,

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with weight consciously moving around the feet depending on what is being done; through experimentation it is possible to adopt a pose in which the rear foot appears to be the weight bearing foot, while the foot in front, through careful manipulation of posture, is actually the one being used- a feint that could utterly confuse an attacker attempting to sweep the legs.

There are far more mystical teachings within tai chi that, presumably, few if any westerners have been privileged enough to learn unless they joined a monastic order or similar group- it is not clear if they are meant to be metaphorical in nature (and refer to weightedness and focus) or if they are meant to be taken literally.

SHAMANISM

The shamanist's path is surely a practice in internal magick- the shaman may attempt to communicate with outside forces, but the actual power is largely concentrated and expressed from within the shaman themselves.

Many shamanist traditions revolve around the use of mind altering substances as part of ritual- this ranges from the consumption of *Amanita Muscaria* species in Siberia, to *Ipomoea Tricolor* and other ergine containing species in Central America, to *Psilocybe Cubensis* and certain cactus species used in the southwest of North America by tribes found there. In fact, one would be hard pressed to find a single pagan group in antiquity, some of which still exist and practice much as they always did to begin with, that didn't use narcotics in an attempt to connect with the divine. On their face, these practices appear externalized, because the shaman may communicate with, or be possessed by, good or evil spirits, or animal spirits, or the ghosts of the deceased.

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In reality, the practice is almost entirely internal; the laypeople often do not partake in these rituals, because the shaman themselves is the only one truly trusted to consume the sacred plants and fungi; in most other cases, the shaman is at least the one administering these substances, as a sort of sacrament that only they are considered to truly understand. Unfortunately, oppression towards some indigenous pagan groups has long since bastardized the true teachings of their use, and so only scattered groups, either sheltered from outside intrusion or by passing down secretive traditions usually in an oral form, still remain to teach the actual rituals involved.

Only in the new age movements do large groups normally share these substances- oddly this bastardization of the original traditions involving such substances are normally external in form and actually do involve attempting to communicate with or commune with spirits, ghosts, and often extra terrestrial beings; this is no better represented than by the move away from completely natural mushrooms or cacti and towards LSD or other synthetic or partly synthetic substances used to do so. It is said that certain native groups in the American southwest abandoned mescal beans for salvia plants because of the danger involved in consuming the beans themselves; which are a potent deliriant with a drastic poison content and an almost unfathomable length of effect when consumed, whereas the salvia they eventually adopted provides a no-less powerful but far shorter and less poisonous effect- this did not affect the ritualism and veneration involved with regards to these substances, which separates such a change in substance from the modern trend towards increasingly dangerous synthetics.

Shamanism also contains an element of other anthropocentric ritualism and internalization; in my own research on Iboga (an African substance used by the followers of a god called 'Bwiti') I came across one of its curious effects,

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which is in essence to rid the body of addiction to other substances. Supposedly, such rituals, properly conducted, have a far higher success rate in addiction breaking than any of the methods used in the western world. The Africans that use this substance are mostly using it to commune with Bwiti and other cosmic forces; however, in its western adaptation, it has actually gone from a primitivist external occult ritualism, to one that is internal; in this singular case we find evidence of the west actually converting the ritual's purpose in reverse- in all other cases I am aware of, the west externalizes the internal, not the other way around.

As explained by some who have undergone the actual iboga ritual, the cosmic, spiritual forces encountered are actually secondary in importance, and the experience long lasting and at least as potent as that encountered by users of DMT containing substances- the primary purpose, for them, is the introspection and focus on the self, that resolves psychological addiction by forcing the individual to go deep inside their own psyche, asking in essence "why am I allowing tobacco/alcohol/etc to control me?" They then find themselves mildly amused at their former addiction and generally seem to move past it- the iboga rituals have also been used in an effort to move beyond post traumatic stress, with mixed results.

The most spiritual substances I encountered in my own "study" of shamanism were all completely natural- oddly most of these plants are utterly legal until physically consumed, after which a legal gray area is encountered depending on what was taken. From a psychological perspective, the consumption of most substances and most rituals revolving around their consumption are more useful for introspection than they are for communicating with actual demonic or angelic forces, or encountering a god; true, if you take enough DMT you will probably end up talking to mushroom people or reptilians or

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centipede aliens, but that doesn't necessarily mean you have left the physical plane for an actual, extant realm; the assumption here is that mostly these individuals are encountering their own glorious imagination and are subconsciously communicating with themselves which is no less impressive than doing so with foreign beings.

In this case, it is the most pure form of internalization possible; they've gone beyond introspection into the realm of literally communicating with their own partitioned brain, which can have substantial benefit or be substantially terrifying depending on their own mental state. Obviously, I cannot stress enough that people should not be consuming such substances, especially where it is illegal to do so (which is commonly the case.) In a show of ultimate hypocrisy, those deemed worthy can legally consume them based on their ethnic heritage.

There are multiple ritual systems involved with various mind altering substances that have their roots in shamanism; for obvious reasons I cannot here instruct anyone on their use (and must discourage such use in order for this text not to be censored in parts of the so-called civilized world) but will explain some of the ritualism.

First to the shamans in Siberia, Finland, and a few other regions; in times past the people there noticed that reindeer that consumed amanita mushrooms acted in a most strange manner, leaping about (giving rise to the Santa's flying reindeer mythology, no less!) and apparently interacting with invisible beings. At the same time, people also began consuming the mushrooms, but probably noticed that the experience included substantial nausea and cramping; it is not known how the practice began, but at some point they realized that drinking the urine of reindeer that had consumed the mushrooms provided a far gentler, more enjoyable experience (as muscarine, one of the

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active ingredients, is removed by the kidneys, and the urine mostly contains muscimol.) Later, they began preparing the mushrooms by drying them over a fire, which also converts the muscarine and ibotenic acid to muscimol. The rituals changed further, as shaman began to ritualistically ingest the mushrooms and handed out their urine as a sacrament.

Second, to the users of morning glory (tricolor species) and other species in Central America, the seeds are unpalatable and were and are prepared usually using other substances into which it is mixed- it cannot be cooked or smoked however, as the ergine and LSA the seeds contain begins to break down even at room temperature, and far faster at higher temperatures. Upon ingestion, slight nausea and cramping is coupled with a meditative trance and feelings of euphoria, occasionally and at higher doses, with strange visions which range from geometric structures to repeating, colorful patterns. In these cultures, the sacrament is typically part of more elaborate rituals, although there is also evidence that individuals privately grew and consumed these species on their own for recreational purposes also.

Third, as involves iboga ritualism in Africa, the consumption of this potent hallucinogen is always coupled with tribal rituals; usually, the tribe beats drums in a rhythmic manner in an attempt to appease Bwiti and call forth cosmic spirits- in these rituals those who have taken the iboga are carefully overseen by others in order to keep them comfortable and to treat them medicinally should the need arise.

Fourth, to ayahuasca brews, this is a complex DMT containing substance which involves medicine as well as religion, for the main purpose of ayahuasca is actually as a potent purgative which can be explained medicinally as being useful for removing parasites and as a preparation for fasting; the

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taste is horrendous and a purge is inevitable even with "modern" recipes which contain different species from the original recipe involving banisteriopsis vines and chacruna leaves. These rituals are often communal, involving an entire village, in which all adults will partake in a purge one or more times a year.

Finally, to blue lotus (*nymphaea caerulea*) the traditional preparation involves steeping the stamens or whole flowers in wine to extract the active ingredients, which are hypnotic. Most ritualism involved in their use is lost to time or buried in ancient records in ruins yet to be discovered, but we do find an allusion to them in Homer's Odyssey with the island of lotus eaters; this is almost surely the same species, and would have quite literally resulted in the population entering a trance-like state of apathy. The flavor of wine steeped with blue lotus is at best tolerable and at worst as bitter as chewing on tree bark, and the effect unique, giving relaxed visions of various deities and creating a general sense of apathy towards the world, if only for a fairly short period of time.

MANTRAS

Mantras, I admit, I struggled to categorize here- it was not immediately clear if they pertained mostly to the internal (for healing and good luck and other effects) or to the external, as many of them venerate particular Vedic figures such as Ganesha or Shiva. In the end I determined that they had to be included with the internal; it is clear from the teachings of some Vedic practitioners that the actual deities themselves are often not taken quite literally or quite at face value; indeed some claim all of the many beings in the Hindu pantheon and similar gatherings of cosmic power are actually just expressions or extensions of the same one creator or creative force, roughly equivalent to the triune deity proposed by christians asked if Jesus is separate from the godhead and holy ghost or if they are the same being in

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three parts- this particular facet of christiandom has spawned many wars and pogroms. I will speak at some slight length on this Hindu concept in a later section.

One of the more important mantras is simply "om gam ganapataye namaha" repeated many times, usually in a manner that resembles a meditative trance; where meditation and tai chi may be seen as the mental and physical forms of focus-based practice, mantras may in a manner be seen as the link between the two, being physical but also involving a stillness of the physical body, absent the vocalizations and breathing done for this purpose. In the case of this particular mantra, it is considered a sort of vocal offering to Ganesha meant to secure good fortune and good luck; but even a completely atheistic, anti-spiritual individual should be able to see that reciting a droning chant such as this will necessarily cause the mind to focus and relax, along with the body if the correct pose is being used. Similar chants to Shiva, Parvati, Hanuman, and other figures often follow the same basic tenets; an appeal in vocal form, invariably in Hindi, is made to a specific deity, normally while seated in a semi-meditative position with the individual breathing in a specific manner and presumably reciting the verses in a uniform manner.

The Hindu mantras used today are perhaps different from the original Vedic method, but probably are not substantially altered, except that the language and the names of the deities have changed; mantra is separate from invocation in that the mantra is a repeated line or verse which may or may not be used to actually secure the blessing of a deity or force, whereas an invocation may be self created by the individual themselves and will always either call upon such a force itself, or call upon powers previously bestowed by that same being or force through other rituals which have already been performed.

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Mantras may be explained by the more secular as merely focusing the mind internally to heal or to increase the probability of success by raising self esteem or self control; it is true that when a person is in balance and at ease, they are less likely to act in a self destructive manner and foil their own ambitions, but this secularist explanation does nothing to explain mantras that are meant to destroy enemies, unless the sole subject are mantras being recited in such a way that a superstitious individual who is being targeted may become emotionally uneasy and paranoid that some ancient force will lead to their demise.

Mantras must also be explained as they pertain to the left hand path, especially where the often misunderstood figure of Kali may appear; for Kali is a fierce opponent, almost impossible to overcome without substantial placation, and often is depicted as a rather grotesque character with multiple decapitated heads around her belt and various weapons with which she demolishes everything that stands against her. Within the idealism of the left hand path, the sinister (literally "of the left"!) is a female force and cosmic potency; Kali in this regards is not merely a demonic, evil, destructive force, but one which is more like a female lion, defensive and powerful but concerned primarily only with destroying those who harm women or children; numerous religiously themed films in India allude to this, with rapacious or drunken men often suffering the wrath of Kali as she stabs, immolates, or crushes them, often taking extreme pleasure in watching them bleed and succumb to her force.

In fact the occult power within the female energy is both nurturing and fierce; mantras reflect this, as one mantra to such a deity might be meant to protect ones' child, or ensure successful marriage, and another might have the purpose of the most literal and pure form of death curse, calling upon some ancient female deity to protect her female flock. However not all mantras involve the female force anyways; Ganesha is a strictly male

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figure and figure heavily in mantra within Hinduism, with some sub-schools entirely or nearly entirely devoted only to this one figure; beyond the strictly religious aspect of Ganesha as the literal elephant god lies the story that he was an actual person, of a particularly wise nature, whose main teachings involved pacifism and respect for all life forms, perhaps explaining the elephant appearance and definitely explaining Ganesha's central role in securing fortune, protection, and good luck. It is not necessary that I should actually prescribe any particular mantras or instructions regarding them, since they are prevalent and can almost all be found on the internet pre-recorded; a person may chant along with such a track or they may memorize it and recite it on their own with or without other aids- mantras do in fact work, although explanations as to why they work range from the religious (a deity is aiding you) to the spiritual (cosmic forces and inner power are aiding you) to the strictly secular (you are changing your psychology and actually insuring your own success.)

One mantra related bit of knowledge, however, that may be of need to those who wish to chant and recite such material, is that when breathing, it should go in through the nose, and typically when the line is recited, at no time is the breath hindered; that is, the words are pronounced in such a way that air is leaving the throat for the entire recited line, uninterrupted; this can be difficult for those with languages and accents which pronounce a crisp "T" and other sounds which force the throat to close, but these can be conscientiously softened for the purpose of recital.

THE PSYCHIC ARTS: TELEKINESIS, TELEPATHY, ASTRAL PROJECTION

The psychic arts are a further example of mysticism in an internal sense; possibly even a secular sense to some who practice the art of telekinesis or astral travel but themselves are atheistic and not even spiritual.

Telekinesis (or psychokinesis) is quite simply the movement of physical objects using the mind or mental power, without coming into physical contact with them; although most people do not believe this is possible, it has at least been widely experimented upon by various military programs and religious groups, some of which claim they have actually had success in doing so; the probability that it can happen I believe increases along with our understanding of quantum physics. Telepathy is the transmitting of information from person to person, or from person to animal, or animal to person, without words or visual communication- in shorthand it can also refer to "reading minds" and deal with the topic of pulling thought from another being without their knowledge. Again, as before, some claim great success in doing so.

Astral travel or projection is accomplished when an individual is able to "leave" their body to enter a sort of spiritual or mental state in which they are able to observe and sometimes interact with things which are not in proximity to their body. Astral travel may also take the form of attempting to access the "astral plane" which is variously described as an imaginative subconscious plane, another dimension, or a sort of spirit world.

Of all the three, astral projection is the only one accepted

by mainstream scientists to any degree, and is now not only seen as real, but has even been successfully tested in at least one case that I am aware of, such that it was possible to determine what the brain was doing when it occurred. When astral travel occurs and is not relegated to projecting the consciousness elsewhere in the physical world, it can sometimes involve a quest to access what are termed the akashic records, a sort of interdimensional archive of all sentient experience which, when entered, contains a combination of actual historical recordings as well as the individual's own imagination- the two are said to be difficult to distinguish from one another for all but the most well trained occultists.

There are other psychic arts alluded to as well; ESP (essentially enhanced perception that does not rely on the normal 5 senses) and levitation are widely mentioned; although the latter is also supposedly achieved in some tribal religious groups and also those experiencing some level of stigmata-style episode or other severe religious manifestation.

An enormous number of books have been made on the subject of the psychic realm as well as for each of these individual capabilities; most often they are seen as the stuff of street magicians, as parlor magic, and as hoaxes pulled on gullible or easily fooled audiences, the sort of material one might read about in the transcripts of a Victorian era seance, but as they move further from the superstitious side of the occult and further into the realm of first pseudoscience and then science, they are becoming more widely accepted (science fiction indeed often becomes science fact, as any fan of the genre in any of its forms understands.)

Telekinesis, as far as I am aware, has almost always involved attempts to focus and project the energies of the body into a foreign object and is rarely if ever alluded to by those

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practicing more ritualistic occultism- more evidence of its internal nature, yet the psychic arts (telekinesis especially) is purely occult; the idea of manipulating the physical world through some sort of mystic energy or vibration is at least as old as the Vedic religions, and possibly would have been known to people long before this period in history, perhaps within the somewhat little-understood cultures that inhabited northern Turkey and the Caucasus region before Sumeria became an empire.

Telepathy is a bit more complicated, since some modern day (and usually self proclaimed) eastern religious leaders claim the ability to teach techniques for using it, normally involved with the more new age splinter groups within Hinduism and eastern spiritualism- teachings that are frowned upon and distrusted by more theistic devotees. With telepathy, studies have also involved animals, and shown that there does seem to be evidence that humans are able to project some level of consciousness towards them, particularly to the more intelligent domesticated species such as cats or dogs which have co-evolved alongside man since he first began building the rudiments of society- I theorize (but cannot substantiate this belief myself) that there is indeed a sort of innate psychic bond between sentient beings, and that these long-domesticated animals would naturally have a higher affinity for this capability, having largely lived alongside the human race for thousands of years- this could however be largely coincidental, as man may have simply chosen to domesticate these species specifically because they showed enhanced intelligence to begin with- that the species indicated in telepathic studies are almost invariably mammals could lead us to ignore other species with such possible abilities. Astral projection is a step closer to mainstream acceptance than the other psychic arts, although normally it is relegated to the field of neuroscience and explained as a subconscious state, gaining simply the moniker of "out of body experience" in a

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general sense; these experiences are demonstrably and provably real and have been tested in academic circles to great success; all that remains for Astral projection to be accepted by science is for science to understand that long-distance projection rather than simply "hovering over ones' own body while in a subconscious state" is possible and demonstrably so.

All of the psychic arts have at least been studied by various academic and military circles; this has led them to be called by believers as a hidden art and by detractors as a cold war era dead end field of study that resulted in no actual progress- it is not, however, clear whether the US or Soviet militaries had success in such endeavors; it is true that even earlier, as early as certain occult groups in pre-World War Two Bavaria and Austria, such topics were widely discussed, and even earlier they were alluded to in Victorian Era theosophical and similar groups- militarizing the spiritual is far older though, with every ancient medieval king possessing a collection of alchemists and scribes and theologians for advice, and earlier than that various priests and sorcerers who would have been in continual residence in the pagan world.

In the modern age, with Hitler being the bogeyman for every evil, these practices are slightly more taboo because the Nazis were seen as particularly interested in the occult and the psychic especially- most people who feel this way overlook the prevalence of fortune tellers, clairvoyants, and occultists consulted by almost every US president, and various other world leaders- notably during the interwar period and up through Ronald Reagan's wife's astrologer which seems to have convinced her to directly control Reagan's speech and travel dates to avoid him being in any danger. The exact methodology of these psychic arts is the main reason to class them with the internal occult; like meditation almost all guides to the psychic tell the individual to focus first and foremost before giving any

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further instruction.

For example, a person attempting to use telekinesis will likely first be told to sit, relax, and quiet the mind, before psychically "reaching out" by attempting to generate a sort of non-physical psychic limb, told to simply "feel" the imaginary limb, which then reaches out to manipulate an object; while I have not seen anyone capable of literally doing this, I have seen many people try- there is however extant footage which is at least claimed to depict telekinesis literally, physically working, from a variety of military and academic experiments.

As another example of projecting sense, astral travel is said to be accomplished by meditative relaxation followed by an attempt to subconsciously replicate recent sensory experience; a person may for instance place a scented candle in the next room, smelling it and memorizing that exact sense, after which they retire to the adjacent area, lay down, and attempt to enter the state between being asleep and awake (which is also indicated in waking dreams and sleep paralysis.) By consciously memorizing that scent, the person attempts to enter this suggestive trance-like state fully mindful of the next room, such that when they enter into their projective state, they find themselves levitating above their own body, or above the candle, fully aware and able to sense their surroundings.

The very term "extra sensory" which applies readily to all of the fields of psychic research itself relates merely to the removal of the necessity of using the normally functional perceptive regions such as the eyes (vision) or ears (hearing.) This leads to a somewhat ambiguous possible explanation for these abilities- I class them with the internalized on two assumptions.

First, the majority of those practicing the psychic arts are

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not doing so with the aid of the types of ritualism associated with externalized mystic forces (demons, angels, invoking deities, and so forth.)

Secondly, the majority of suitable, acceptable explanations for the use of such forces are classed more with quantum physics or other scientifically feasible phenomena; and where science is able to explain such phenomena, their explanation should be preferred, when that same externalization is absent.

This does not, however, apply readily to levitation, which is as often ritualistic and accomplished by shaman or other religious individuals, and which seems less often alluded to directly by the same individuals practicing their telepathy and ESP- in the singular case of levitation, it should perhaps remain a gray area, since the same phenomenon is ascribed both to meditative focus as well as to the ingestion of hallucinogens, as well as notorious christianized cases involving priests and monks struck by the holy spirit or angelic influence.

We even have tales of levitation involving stonehenge which claim that the stones present were not only levitated into place (different from telekinesis as it sometimes appears these tales are indicating they moved on their own) but that they operated as vehicles which could be controlled by those with the necessary training using their minds only.

EXTERNAL MAGICK

INVOCATIONS

Invocations are not the same as chants or mantras, although the presentation can be quite similar; the purpose and the source of power is different- mantras focus the inner power, while an invocation is specifically meant to invoke (call upon) a deity, a demon, or some other presumably intelligent being or force.

Within my own practice, I generally create my own invocations, which are often based on ancient sources, but which may also have an element of internal meaning; symbolism and word use which specifically represents my own goals (this does not seem to be routine, however.) In most cases, the invocation is prescribed in form, often found in a text of interest to the occultist, who may or may not adapt it and alter it. Invocation is often, but not always, associated with other ritualism- the use of an altar, or perhaps candles or incense important to the demon or deity to be called upon; examples of simplistic invocations are found in firsthand form especially at the aescleopion in Greece, where triangular tablets were used to curse or heal, almost always by calling upon a respective Hellenistic deity.

In fact it is this triangular method which I favor; the tablet may be worn as an amulet, left as an offering, or simply recited in a ritualistic manner; the lines normally are written from top to bottom and from longest to shortest, with the final, lowest line often being a repeat admonition or a miniaturized prayer recitation to the deity- at these same healing centers, fake limbs or organs were also found, deposited with other relics, left there in hope of healing. It is presumed that most such

invocations are no longer within the physical record, as they were likely often made on wooden tablets on which wax was melted, and inscriptions created- organic materials which would have degraded centuries ago.

In most western occult practices, the invocation is demonic in origin, no better do we find an example than in the Ars Goetia in which there is one general form of invocation used, with the only difference in ritualism being the seal used, and the name called upon- the 72 spirits listed in the work are loosely related (or perhaps directly related, as time may tell) to the demons spoken of in certain apocryphal texts of extremely old age, which tell of King Solomon binding them with a ring allowing him to enslave these evil beings to build the temple of Jerusalem; that modern christians are oblivious to this story and yet believe in the innate negativity of demonic invocation is amusing.

Invocations are technically flung around all the time, including by abrahamists, whenever they mention the name of one of their figures in a surprised or angry manner; one might say that in a way exclaiming "Jesus Christ!" is a form of extremely short, habitual invocation made upon the sudden appearance of pain or stress; invocation here differs mildly from prayer (which shall be quantified later) which would necessarily contain a direct request to the deity or being. In fact, the reigning, major difference between prayer and invocation is simply within an invocation the being is generally commanded while in prayer the being is requested to show their power. A practitioner of the Goetia will command demons forth from the abyss- a christian knelt in prayer will ask their god for intercession. However, both prayer and invocation fall under the category of external magick anyways; the difference in the manner of calling forth power differs but the power is external to the practitioner regardless of whether the deity or demon is being

commanded or requested into action.

In medieval times, invocation was almost invariably regarded as evil, possibly because it had already been made clear by generations of christian priests that their deity was singular and not able to be commanded to do anything, except in ancient times (apparently) by Jewish clergy and kings and then only in times of extreme distress and under the conditional application of extreme penitence.

What these medieval leaders did not know is that the church had already attempted to hide the very existence of apocryphal texts their own body had discounted as heretical; in which various invocations were used by Solomon and other occultists to great effect- even more bizarre rituals often associated with the same figures ranged from sealing demons in a large bronze vessel to prevent them from sowing chaos, to causing them (in the era of Jesus) to enter the bodies of pigs to relieve the possessed from their torment.

Since it is clear that a bronze vessel is not a repository for, say, psychic forces or anything similar, if these stories are taken at face value or even as metaphor these phenomena would have required that some intelligent being possessed of mystic power be bound to such an object. Similar rituals (some which combine invocation with meditation!) using images as repositories of psychic power never make the claim to unleash literal demons; different from such Solomonic rituals that do. There is a practice referred to as necromancy of specific value for discussing invocations- a field of the occult revolving around communication with (or the raising of or manipulation of) the deceased.

Necromancy, whether ancient (as referred to in Greek or Egyptian materials) or modern, always seems to revolve around

invocations to deities that rule over the process of life and death; this may have been intrinsically tied to the process of embalming in Egypt, for there are few tombs not decorated by large numbers of invocations and often prayers lining every available inch of wall space, with the inclusion of various amulets and other ornaments which themselves may include similar ritualistic themes. Necromancy may involve the recalling of a spirit or it may involve the raising of a literal corpse back to a living or semi-living state; where the former is being practiced, it will always involve a ritualistic command or admonishment (invocation) and is used to communicate with the deceased- in more genuine circles this is literally conducted in a graveyard with great ceremony, whereas it was later perverted into what is now called a seance- in the latter case it's clear that most of those using them have no idea what they're doing except that they know how to get the recently bereaved to sign a check.

Where a corpse is being literally brought back to life, or into a semi-awakened state, an invocation may be used, although it will likely be coupled with more hands-on ritualism; the bible once again astonishingly refers to this process with the raising of Lazarus, although it attributes the necromancy to the intervention of Yahweh's power rather than to Jesus being sorcerous in nature. Creating invocations for use is quite simple- aside from literally thousands of prescribed invocations available in any grimoire or book of magick, they can be made from scratch- I have suggested to others that this be paired with other ritualism, to increase the power of the invocation to be made. With this suggestion, it is possible to allow even those with no specific religious or spiritual path, and not necessarily even a belief in the occult as anything beyond metaphysics, to make use of this process, since it can be explained either as appeals made to a deity or demon (the more authentic format) or else a more new age explanation to be given, which relegates any result to the psychic or the manipulation of energy.

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Invariably, I suggest that the practitioner develop a ritual in a way meaningful to themselves, preferably one which is at least tangentially related to ancient ritualism- a great deal of material is available linking most of the gods and cosmic forces of mankind to different seasons, planets, or elements; from there it is merely a matter of, for example, using incense or other materials representative of those same phenomena, and combining it with an invocation or multiple invocations. It is possible to design rituals so elaborate that they stretch on for days or even longer, or to link them for celebratory use only on a specific date, or when a specific planet conjoins another, or in certain lunar phases- whatever seems best to the occultist should be used, with an eye to symbolism; within my own work, occult rituals, (which almost always involve some form of divine or malevolent invocation) follow a four-way pattern, in which only the lunar cycle is considered as a primary limit on their use- with the empty moon representing the physical, the full moon representing the divine spiritual, the waning moon representing the psychic, and the waxing moon representing the demonic.

However these archetypal considerations only hold a specific importance to me because I choose to give them this importance; and while lunar cycles are important in almost all forms of the occult, this specific categorization is primarily for my own use; others can choose to use the same system, or may choose any of a number of others which may work just as well, or perhaps better than this system for their own purposes- my tendency to dwell on the physical and demonic and to all but ignore the psychic arts in my own path is not the sort of practice some might consider palatable.

An invocation must however excite the user to a higher mental state- this needs to be the case regardless of whether it is a prescribed, authentic ancient ritual or one they have made themselves; in the former case- perhaps calling upon Artemis or

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some other pagan force- they would not choose to make use of such occult words if it didn't speak to them on a spiritual level; in the latter case, surely they will choose words and lines which speak directly to their desires.

It is important to have at least a fairly advanced understanding of pagan figures to have a working breadth of invocations to choose from; there are literally thousands of deities and even more lesser entities already described by the occult world, all of which have specific purposes and are called upon in different ways; a deity representing chaos and lunacy will require a style of invocation wildly different from a deity representing pastoral peace and order.

PRAYER

Having described invocations it is now necessary to describe prayer, its nature and usage; importantly as I have stated already, the two are not synonymous, and prayer is more of a request than a command or admonition to the spiritual world. When a westerner says they are praying, most often they mean that they intend to give praise and thanks to Jesus Christ or Jehovah, or occasionally Allah, for the good things in life, during which time they may also make requests to the same deity.

There is an element of inauthenticity in modern prayer, however; most modern abrahamists do not, for example, consider it wise or even scriptural to pray to their god to allow them to kill their enemies, or glorify the same deity through conquest; oddly though, these types of prayers, as well as the ever-present prayers of the sick and bereaved, were once the most common types of praying that would be done in the ancient world; the bible itself alludes to this, as king after king and warrior after warrior plead with Jehovah to ensure their success (and almost always success is granted as long as the one doing

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the praying heeds Jehovah's divine laws.) Sometimes Jehovah throws in an extra command which seems nonsensical, only to ultimately lead to victory, such as telling his Jewish army, led by Gideon, to break pots, light torches, and sound a horn, ultimately causing the enemy camp to erupt in infighting, decimating their enemy entirely.

Prayer is thus seen as a form of white magick insofar as it is seen as occultism at all- most don't even realize this, despite its obvious similarity to invocation and even, in some ways, to evocation if some sort of saintly figure is being prayed to; but this isn't reality, for in the past a prayer was just as often lifted up before battle as it was used to heal the sick. In the most modern sense most individuals who pray simply do so out of force of habit and probably don't even think much about it. The lords prayer, within christianity, is somewhat distinct, in that it is more in the form of an invocation than a prayer in the strictest sense, as it appears to tell god what he has preordained himself to do, than to ask him for anything specific. The Catholic church that makes use of this more widely appears to take this slightly more commanding tone, avowing that its priests have supernatural powers, while the protestants more often look to the pastor or minister as a sort of charismatic figure who nonetheless, in some congregations, might handle snakes or lay hands on people in an attempt to channel the power of their deity.

Prayers, much like invocations, do not necessarily follow any preordained script- in the case of the rituals of Catholicism (which are all available in their trifecta of ritual works as *Rituale Romanum* or "The Roman Ritual") most prayerful offerings are scripted, and take the form of quite elaborate rituals, down to the manner of dress, the actions of the congregants, and may often regard certain holidays or current events, which prescribe the general flow of the service. Some of the most elaborate occult rituals in the world are in use to this very day in the Catholic

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body, as anyone with a knowledge of occultism, having gone to such a service, will (sometimes begrudgingly) admit. The fact that fumitory is difficult to get a hold of even in todays online world, while the Catholic church churns out fumitory for its censers, should show us their seeming dominance over the trappings they themselves make use of.

On its own, prayer is not elaborate at all, and most of the less ritualistic congregants of the world don't adopt a specific dress code while praying (other than not "looking dirty" at church.) It is, quite simply, a request to some external force- such requests to the gods date back thousands of years, much further back into human history than abrahamism itself.

There is a way of explaining prayers' existence within the realm of anthropology that might here be worth noting, and this is a theory which I believe is probably true.

In the far past, the early days of tribal, primitive mankind, it seems that the shaman, priest, or elders, would attempt to command their deities to bring rain, to allow them to destroy a foe, to bring an end to storms, to ensure fertility, and that these early rituals were preferred, especially by the priestly classes, which enjoyed the finer things in life in the form of gifts given to their order in exchange for cosmic protection. Over time, in various cases, where the priests or shaman were not successful in obtaining the favor of the gods, the citizens would gradually grow weary of their chanting- in these cases it is likely they either abandoned the spiritual path of their own tribe and adopted that of one which appeared to work, or they butchered the priestly class in a blood offering, and simply elevated others to the priesthood.

Over time, this appears to have led to the priestly class declaring that the deities could not be commanded but only

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asked for intervention; if the deities refused it then became necessary to deliver an offering to them, or perhaps it was evidence someone in the tribe was sinning- in either case it was a coincidentally good cop out for the priests, because they were no longer culpable when things didn't go as planned; in a situation such as war when normally one side at most can claim a victory (sometimes neither side can do so) this was important, because regardless of which tribe won, at least one of the tribes would formerly have been angered at their shaman and likely butchered them.

Thus came the evolution of prayer, which might be seen as separate from invocation and yet a sort of weaker version thereof- a derivative that is still useful within the occult (especially for those claiming the ability to quite literally commune with their deities or choice) even if it is a latter-day perversion of the original commands of a shaman or wise man. Other than the literally thousands of prescribed, dogmatic prayers within the realm of various religions, it is possible to design them for oneself; when this is done, the goal is not the same as with invocation where a being is commanded as a servant or fellow to the occultist, but rather is meant to be placated, such that favor is obtained. Since the being is regarded as literally present and literally possessed of power, it is thus important to stay on their good side, so to speak- which is usually accomplished with great respect and reverence, regardless of what specific god or being is being called on for assistance. In ancient circles, many of these deities enjoyed being treated to an offering of food- often meat, but also fruit, and at other times grains or certain scents regardless of origin that had a sort of importance or connection with the being in question.

Within these greater prayer-centric rituals, we can observe a sort of pattern that seems to mostly cross between

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religion and religion and across cultures- namely, the offering, scents, and even ritual garb seem almost invariably to emulate the aspects of the being to be prayed to.

For example, we see the ecstatic rites of Dionysus- a god of cheer and wine, of pastoral peace and bliss, celebrated by initiates who were often completely naked, drunk, and singing prayers to this Greek being- to the Dionysian initiate this was an emulation of the nature of the deity itself, connected directly to good food and drink and spirit, with a lesser, more convoluted connection to human sexuality, specifically of the lustful nature; as such these female initiates drove themselves into a frenzied state, apparently pleasuring themselves frequently, possibly in lesbian orgies.

Opposing this, any figure of death or malevolence seems to be called upon by the stereotypical black-robed occultists gathered in some forsaken, lonely place, chanting quietly and perhaps offering blood (a modern day perversion, for blood is a living fluid and more aptly offered to a deity representing birth or life than death.) Oddly, in the Greek case with Hades (Pluto) this deity also represented material wealth, possibly because of the connotation of being subterranean, and thus present in areas which one would expect to find precious gems or metals in. In many cultures their rituals and prayers, and the deities themselves, are associated with the concept of seasons and of the passing of time, either in a cycle or a linear fashion (or some combination of both.)

Within Wicca we see this in the wheel of the year, but it is also present as the Vedic cycle as well as the sunwheel, the zodiac, and dozens of other permutations of this same idea. We see a large variety of fertility gods and goddesses often celebrated in spring using symbols of fertility (even the rabbits and eggs present in modern, entirely secular Easter) and a large

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variety of harvest and agricultural deities celebrated in fall, when the harvest comes- in cultures where there is no such autumnal frosting of the crops, and in which the harvest is continual, these are replaced most often by powerful beings which control rain and sun, the limiting factors present when the temperature rarely or never falls low enough to kill off agricultural goods, as is the case in the tropics.

Prayers are literally no different than any of these other considerations when it comes to their design- a temple priest praying to some ancient death god to cause a neighboring tribe to become diseased is unlikely to dress in a yellow robe and petition the deity in a happy meadow surrounded by the first fruits of harvest while smiling citizens look on as a gentle flute is played in the background. Likewise, the same temple priest is not going to offer a happy, gentle, uplifting message to the deity, and is far more likely to enumerate a series of frenzied curses on the other tribe while offering his own blood or while prisoners are tortured and the bloodletting takes their lives as a sacrifice.

EXORCISM

Exorcism in the most rudimentary sense, the casting out or casting off (dispelling) of some occult force or being also fits squarely into the concept of externalized magick. Although in ancient times it seems that spirits were drawn out through herbalist practices, it doesn't seem to have been long before primitive man began calling upon other beings representing healing or benevolent power in a more general sense. Most modern conceptions of the process of exorcism are Catholic in form, with even protestant ministers attempting such a feat normally using a copy of the same *Rituale Romanum*, usually obtained in surplus, the only variant being that the exorcist isn't ordained by the church itself.

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Although I personally choose to believe that demonic presences are demonstrably "good" and that possession is at the very least infrequent and at most usually invited rather than involuntary, it has nonetheless found a niche market in the more paranormal corners of christiandom and has extended even to new age and some "white" occultist groups, who believe it necessary to guard against such forces and beings. In the former case, attempts are made through ritual or thought to develop a sort of aural shield, whereas in the latter, possession might more be seen as an animalistic force than a christianized demon.

In a show of its original pagan form, exorcism without the Roman Ritual is now becoming more common, leading to a massive overstock of white sage on the market, as smudges of the same are burned in an effort to purify energy; a sort of ritualism which is far more simple than hiring a priest and which seems the now preferred method of purging an evil presence- these smudges can be found in almost any organic goods or cooperative market, as well as on the internet, and of course in any store specializing in occult or paranormal materials- this has unfortunately endangered several sage habitats specifically in Colorado where it is a native species.

Regardless of the form of exorcism being used, it always seems to coincide with a plea to some deity- most often this deity is Jesus or Allah, but certain pagan beings are also used, especially those which hold importance within Wicca or Native shamanism. Here we need to separate the islamic and christian traditions of exorcism, for while in the christian world any entity not considered an intercessor or angel is a demon and regarded as pure evil, within islam there are other creatures, jinn (or djinn) which are considered sentient and capable, it is said, of being converted to islam, after which they will not attempt to possess people- what's not clear is whether islamic theology, properly understood, regards this possession in a literal sense as more of a

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cause of sickness and sin, or whether it is a more literal possession, for example with the victim rolling around screaming, blaspheming, and involuntarily committing acts of sheer malevolence.

Within judaism we might also separate the orthodoxy and ancient beliefs from the much larger, more modern liberal movements which regard such things as superstition; one reason we see so little of such material even among more religious judaists is purely that it would be bad for business were multiple news sources to report exorcism as a regular practice in Israel (practices which would amusingly be called heresy by the christians as well.) I should also point out the large difference between the sort of Hollywood inspired modern conception of possession and that which is more ancient and more "real."

The word "demon" itself, as understood by christian theology as representing malevolent forces typically derived from Satan, comes from a more ancient Greek word daemon; this term, in its original context, is used interchangeably for the spirits of the deceased, malevolent beings or ghosts, and perhaps most importantly for inspiration; in the ancient sense, a person would be possessed if they merely got a sudden idea which led them to develop something of value; art, or a book, or perhaps some other invention or innovation. When we consider this, possession itself is not necessarily malevolent, and the term has been merely narrowed in the modern world to refer only to specifically harmful encounters with foreign beings; it is only in this narrow sense that most modern religions will recommend exorcism as a cure, and even then they often bow to pressure and refuse to perform them unless they are sure there is an obvious supernatural cause.

This is less often the case in the third world, where demons are blamed for everything from headaches to sexual

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dysfunction, and even possessing friends or relatives with the aim of destroying marital situations. The only form of exorcism currently understood to any degree by western audiences is that performed in every other horror movie produced in the 1970s through the 1990s when witches and zombies ruled the silver screen; in these mock-ups loosely based on actual Catholic rituals, the demon normally demonstrates an unmistakeable and evil power, which can't in any way be explained by science or any rational conceptualization of the occult. Amusingly, in the most famous example (within *The Exorcist*) the possession is caused by interaction with a Ouija board- a childs' novelty of no occult significance whatsoever, which is about as dark and spooky as a 5 dollar voodoo doll or a plastic skull.

That is to say, that because the average person has never studied where the word "demon" comes from, and merely assumes what they heard from a pastor or priest is true, that even those supposedly well versed in demonology have little to no idea what they're talking about; we even see that some of the more infamous grimoires appear to have borrowed pagan names for their demons, such as Amon in the *Ars Goetia*, which appears in much the same form as, possesses similar powers to, and bears the same moniker as, the same deity from ancient Egypt. It could be that the actual author (who was surely not Solomon himself) added this as a joke, or perhaps this particular entry is meant by the wise to be ignored as fake, a sort of stumbling-block for those dabbling with it, who will perform a summoning, fail, and give up. It is also possible that most of the names therein are wrong, merely an adaptation of extra-canonical gospels which were left out of the bible, but which would have been present in the well-stocked libraries of alchemists and sorcerers around the time it was written- the largely illiterate nobles and royalty of the period would have fawned over such a tome of supposedly sacred knowledge, despite the prevalence of a thousand grimoires of higher quality that exist.

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Exorcism is not something which ought to be toyed with; although one can debate whether literal possession is due to mental illness, cosmic forces, or an actual intelligent being or demon, regardless of the cause, any such behavior on the part of the victim may at times be violent. The general process of exorcism almost always relies on tormenting the foreign spirit before any other attempts are made; in Catholic circles, this means reciting liturgical materials, while protestants may play gospel music on a loop; pagans tend to shun such ideas, preferring to cast out the unclean spirit by the use of herbal smoke, chanting, or both.

I have witnessed so-called "demonic possession" myself and found it to appear oddly similar to mental illness; only in the context of a predisposed christian body does it seem to be referred to as possession, especially when it occurs within a church itself and results in the laying on of hands (hardly a dogmatically sound approach- in fact some might consider this a way for the spirit to transmigrate into those trying to remove it!)

After a period of torment the spirit may be asked its name, at least within abrahamic circles; the muslims, too, will repeatedly question the spirit while calling upon Allah- in Hollywood, the spirit usually proceeds to levitate as a wild-haired priest chants in Latin and tells the spirit Jesus compels it to leave, but more often the person merely rolls around on the floor screaming, while a liturgy is calmly recited as many times as needed. In the Roman Ritual, if one complete ritual fails to drive the spirit out, rest is taken and another attempt made later, but within protestant circles the exorcism is normally continuous, without abatement, unless it has progressed to such a point that the exorcist(s) are unable to continue physically- I have heard no contemporary accounts of pagans or Wiccans proceeding with such length of ritualism, preferring to first use their herbal methods and perhaps tribal chanting, after which a

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doctor is invariably consulted. In fact we may see a difference between those with a more modern, secularized view, and those with a more antiquated view- the former are likely to consult modern medicine and move to exorcism as an afterthought only if modern medicine has failed, while the latter (especially protestant evangelicals) first pray and try to drive sickness out, sometimes resulting in death when no demon was present to begin with and the person was merely ill.

Islamic groups which usually regard the spirit as a jinn rather than an out-and-out demon will attempt to convert the being to islam; it is not clear how, after so many centuries of doing so, there are any jinn left in the world, as they apparently have no means of reproduction, with others cast out and destroyed entirely through their rituals, while christians regard the forces of Hell as more or less inexhaustible, supplying legions, literally billions of individual, at least partly sentient malevolent beings.

Hindu exorcism I have regrettably not studied in detail; however it is clear that they regard exorcism as appropriate for dispelling ghosts as well, normally angry ancestral spirits which have gone mad, or are attempting to get some sort of revenge, although in the treatment of such beings no attempt is made to destroy them, and instead attempts are made to please and satisfy them, or distract them so they can do no further harm. This is slightly similar to the Buddhist concept of the demonic realm (and the realm of tormented hungry ghosts below it) but not the same.

EVOCATION

The process of evocation is related to the often conflated invocation in that it calls upon a deity or other force. To those outside of the occult, the mainstream definitions given for both

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of these phenomena appear to be more or less synonymous, with little differentiation being made between the two in any dictionary or encyclopedia.

However, to those within the occult, especially those following more modernized paths (and especially within the black arts as opposed to white magick) the two are further apart, being told apart mainly in that evocation normally involves processes and rituals which do not actually require incantations or invocations, although it is indeed possible to work the two side by side. Here I will focus on two evocative methods, namely scrying and the use of sigils in a stand-alone form, both of which are far easier than designing more elaborate rituals, although elaborate rituals, where desired, can be involved as well; it suffices to say that invocation is a form of evocation, but not all forms of evocation are or involve invocations (which may sound confusing at first, but is fairly simple to explain.)

Scrying is an ancient technique, having been performed with the use of water, flame, mirrors, and all other manner of reflective or energetic surfaces (pyromancy might be termed at least similar in form.) It is from scrying that we get the image of a witch with her crystal ball attempting to foretell the future, or the fortunes of a person gullible enough to have employed her at such a divinatory task.

Most often done using a mirror, it merely involves gazing at its surface and allowing psychic energy to bring forth visions of the future, past, and so forth; here there are two things which relegate it to external magick and also make it useful within evocation. Firstly, even in the original sense as used by ancient pagans, one could say that scrying is quite literally calling forth demons, assuming we use the Greek daemon as it refers to inspiration. Second, scrying can be used either with or without the aid of other rituals (but most often with them) to call

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forth demonic entities into a visible form they would not otherwise take; I have heard of occultists trying to cause demons to appear in smoke as well, as long as the smoke is being generated by an appropriate source.

Evocation using sigils is not the same, although it can be loosely tied to the same principle as scrying (at least as it applies to modern movements within the occult.) In the simplest terms it involves carving or drawing a demonic seal or sigil, and then merely gazing upon it, envisioning desire, and charging it with internal energy, after which the demon, like a sort of parasite, devours that energy and goes forth on its task- and while a mute would not be able to perform an invocation, they could surely perform this style of evocation, further illustrating the difference between the two. Once the sigil is properly charged (and I will expound upon this further) it is normally stored where it won't be found until the occultist is appropriately satisfied, after which it is ritualistically burned or otherwise disposed of, thus breaking its enchantment and ending the ritual, which may last for days, weeks, or years depending upon the result.

Evocation, in my opinion however, is an inferior method to higher ritual magick and invocation in that it requires the occultist, unless they intend to use a recognized demon or deity, to take the extraordinary step of trying to contact new entities and build their seals for use as sigils, either for elaborate rituals to then commence, or otherwise calling upon them. My own successes have almost invariably been greater when an invocation is used, along with other ritualism, while work with sigil charging alone in the absence of such steps seems weaker. In this case, I can chalk this up to my personal preference for far longer rituals with more trappings, as opposed to the modern occultist who may very well favor a quicker methodology.

If the words of Crowley (controversial as he may be) are

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to be believed, it may not actually matter if the deity or demon is recognized as real, and it may not matter what particular ritual is created, because magick is seen as more experimental, and what works is retained, while what appears to be impotent is forgotten and discarded, much like a scientist may repeatedly experiment and slowly improve their results; this is seen by some occult groups as valid dogma, and others as patent nonsense, with the two usually separated by whether their views are outright theistic or more laid back in form. In this case, I take the former view more seriously out of habit, because such sigils and beings that have already been quantified are presumed to be real in some sense, whether literally or figuratively, and perhaps even mentioning Crowley's words will cause some to bristle at the mention.

In the case of scrying it seems intrinsically connected to necromancy, often appearing alongside such practices either through the use of incense or wood smoke (in which the spirit may appear) or as a mirror meant to reflect the image of the deceased in order to establish communication- where these practices relate to the psychic arts they may be seen as drawing upon internal forces (at least in some cases) but when communication with the dead is desired, there is at least one supposedly intelligent being other than the occultist involved; more, if a deity is called upon to deliver the spirit into visible form, or even physical service.

Scrying is additionally of interest due to its simplicity; exact rituals I won't bother to give here, because they are so prevalent due to its popularity in use in the current era- sufficing to say only that a black mirror or a bowl of wine seems to be the preferred method. I have seen, for myself, the move towards simpler, faster methods of calling spirits and other beings recently, and it's no surprise that scrying is gaining momentum in use; I myself have shunned such work generally speaking unless

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it's attached to other ritualism due to my own nature, but others report fantastic results.

Where invocations are involved alongside the evocative scrying process, it seems that wood smoke is more often used as a method for the spirit or being to materialize; I say this hesitantly, for that could be a biased observation based on my own research into the topic, but the "bowl of wine and black mirror" setup for doing so seems to be more favored among those who view it as a psychic art, rather than a literal summoning. As I pointed out, such practices may take place in a graveyard (which in most areas requires permission from the groundskeeper or company overseeing the operations of the area, which is regrettable) although this, too, is changing, with necromancy now viewed more as a calling of the spirit rather than anything involving a literal corpse.

Work with sigils is more easily explained; the method I have used is merely to draw the sigil, preferably in a strong black ink upon white or off-white paper; in this method, the lines ought to be quite bold, for the eyes will be relaxed (or, "half closed" as they are in tai chi or other eastern practices) and thus thinner lines will appear too blurred to make out.

With the sigil crafted, the occultist merely sits in a relaxed pose, often the same pose used for meditation, so as to clear the mind- and begins to gaze upon the symbol as a whole, their eyes in such a relaxed state, and begins to envision with their minds' eye whatever goal they intend to accomplish through demonic means- for this work, it is considered important that a suitable figure be used- the seals present in the Ars Goetia work well for most of these cosmic workings, although other figures may be used. (In fact, I have wondered and may in the future experiment with using statuettes or other objects associated with deities that are not themselves sigils at all- a sort of image

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magick that is at least theoretically similar.)

After a while spent envisioning the intended outcome, the occultist must attempt to "sense" the outcome already literally present- if their goal is money, they may try to subconsciously feel money in their psychic hands, while if they wish to obtain luck they may try to see visions of such symbols as four leaf clovers, or themselves winning the lottery, or something of this manner- it is not enough to simply sense it though, they are meant to will it into being as though it has already been accomplished. The more emotion they pour into this endeavor, the stronger the outcome is supposed to be.

In place of this sort of "charging" of the sigil it is possible to use a standard invocation, as I myself have variously done to greater effect; this could be because my own ability to focus is lower than normal, but there is no way to be sure. At some point, the sigil will flash or disappear, or both- or it may change color; what is important here is that the visual appearance of the paper and the seal upon it will change in an unexpected manner, at which point the seal is "charged" and has presumably been accepted by the being currently being called upon.

At this point, with the sigil charged, no further action is necessary except to store it in a place where it will not be seen, and the occultist is advised to forget the sigil even exists until such a time as their goal is completely fulfilled- after this happens, it is normally burned ritualistically to ash, having served its purpose; the burning dispels any further tampering and prevents the occult forces from either becoming malevolent or randomly affecting the world around them. In fact this may be seen as a companion to, or even an explanation of, peoples' tendency to regard locations once used for occult purposes as "cursed." In the case where an upstart cult begins summoning demonic forces but then fails to properly close up any cosmic

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gates they have opened, these presences are said to remain. Even ritual garments, knives, books, and other objects may be affected and turned into occult images, imprinted with such forces- hence tales of "haunted" objects exhibiting "poltergeist" activity; surely a far better theory than that these objects start opening portals to the netherworld upon their own volition. This informs my belief (and intent to experiment with) simply using objects for such workings, perhaps even utterly random, innocuous items with no occult meaning whatsoever.

TOTEMS

Totems and totemic spirits are set apart from most other topics discussed herein; often, they represent natural spirits in a manner slightly similar to that of a guardian angel, in that they are most often seen as benevolent or neutral in manner, rarely if ever as malevolent except perhaps to the spiritual livelihood of ones' enemies if they are themselves acting in a malevolent manner. Thankfully, I am somewhat well versed in this subject due to my own interest in it.

The manner of totemic veneration and awakening seems to differ depending on which Native group or tribe is queried on the subject- some seem to use hallucinogens in this process, although that is not always the case- famously, the totem pole represents these spirits, a sort of marker for their power, although the idea of a physical representation of such forces is not only found in Mesoamerica and may be far, far older; at Gobekli Tepe we see representations of various animals (possibly meant to represent their spiritual character) and this site dates to a time when any Mesoamericans were still hunting and gathering, in which nowhere on Earth was found any form of deliberate agricultural cultivation beyond what we see to this day in horticulturalist and semi-nomadic societies; man had only just begun to domesticate *canis lupus* at the time this massive

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structure was built. Within the far more well understood Mesoamerican traditions the totemic spirit often took the form of an animal guide- in these rituals, an initiate (usually a young male approaching adulthood) would either go into the forests alone and fast or pray, or be led in an initiatory exercise, depending on the culture (and with or without the aid of mind altering substances.) In the traditions I am more familiar with, it seems the drugs were absent and the process involved a sort of ritual purification bath and subsequently a period of time spent meditating in the wilderness, during which time the animal guide was said to appear.

Skeptics will be quick to note that because the animal guide may be literally in the same form as a typical wild animal, that such experiences may be the result of the hungry, possibly hallucinating initiate seeing a regular, physically real animal, and having various hallucinatory experiences surrounding the event; these skeptics are thus choosing to ignore those tribes which did not consider ritual consumption of plants or fungi important for such rituals, and also ignores the fact that some of these visions take place while in the presence of the rest of the tribe, sometimes without any administered trance state at all.

Where substances are consumed, the Natives wisely seem to gravitate more towards allowing the individual to be in the presence of the rest of the tribe (for harm reduction purposes) or at least in the presence of a shaman or sometimes other initiates, while where the mind altering factor is removed, the experience roughly resembles a period of ascetic wandering. I have theorized before, that some of the better natures of the races of the world were obtained through the emulation of qualities seen in animals- for example the ferocity and teamwork of wolves, or the stoic immovable quality of a bear, or perhaps the perception of an eagle; in this manner, even when seen as purely symbolic, there is a purpose behind any and all totemic

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ritualism.

The totem may not always (or solely) represent animal spirits at all, however. In some cases, the totem is more a representation of ancestral lineage and tribal power; a sort of beacon of potency which allows the ancestral spirits themselves to protect their tribe; ancestor worship is more common in Asia, but it is also found in a more temperate form in the Americas, where some tribes practiced (in ancient times) forms of mummification as well, and appear to have kept the bones of their ancestors and taken them out from time to time, either for holiday celebrations or for other ritual purposes- the presence of these practices in some groups indicates a high level of ancestral veneration, that perhaps was hidden from the colonial Europeans specifically to prevent the desecration of remains.

The totem, whether ancestral or animalistic, can apply even to an entire nation, regardless of how westernized or secularized it is- perhaps this is why the warlike symbol of strength (the Eagle) won out over the Turkey as a symbol for the United States- and it surely explains the prevalence of wolf symbolism in a multitude of cultures, from Romulus and Remus in ancient Rome to modern day Turkey, where not only is the wolf seemingly an unofficial sort of state mascot, but also lends its presence to their largest nationalist order (The Grey Wolves' arm of their nationalist movement)- we see also that animal symbols are chosen on the basis of their similarity to the goals of organizations, tribes, families, and states (and plants used for symbolism on family crests and flags seems to act in a similar manner) from the cunning wolf to the strong bear to the wise owl, and so forth.

Here however I have to state my opposition to the reigning view within anthropology of the totem as essentially just a chosen symbolism (in which an animal or other figure is

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chosen deliberately to represent a tribe or culture)- for while this is in some cases surely true, some of these figures transcend this sort of symbolism and are more equitable to mythological figures, such as aforementioned Romulus and Remus, which seem to have been considered real events by these past cultures; in this case, some of the older totemic symbols and beliefs may not have had anything at all to do with trying to create animal symbolism, and may have been understood to represent actual events (although admittedly some of the more ancient animal guides and symbols may be considered non-totemic.)

In the more recent new age movements some individuals adopt animal spirits as their own personal guides without even participating in mystic ritualism designed to reveal them; I challenge whether these practices are actually genuine in any manner, and whether they can even work, because the person might be unconsciously misrepresenting their own traits, desires, or spiritual potency. In these cases it seems the new ager is probably just trying to find a quick solution to a process that once required extensive ritual work, or preparation, or at the very least the observation of the seasons, while I have seen many people merely adopt a totemic animal on the basis that they "like it" and its traits. As is the case with many new age practices, these animal guides- chosen on the basis of desire and not on some gnosis or realization derived from natural forces- also show no malevolent capability, that is that while the new ager considers them a protector, they have adapted the christianized belief that the guide is functionally unable to harm their foes, which is hardly a belief genuine to any ancient group that I know of that actually used totems.

When a totem is desired there are various manners of revealing them- I have already explained that there may be a presence or absence of the use of mind altering substances, but the practices seem to fall into four basic categories.

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In the first category, which pertains mostly to European and Asian practices, the individual's totemic spirit or spirits revolve around their blood lineage- in these cases, many times the original totemic symbolism has been lost (especially for European and Asian immigrants to the Americas who often felt pressured to "be American" and ignore their own traditions beyond the culinary) which could require those seeking a totemic recognition to research their own genealogy or family history. In recent times this has been made easier by the presence of rather large internet-based movements to document both of these. If study is attempted of the family history, it is likely that a spiritual guide of proper form will eventually be found, after which it can be adopted, preferably with an eye to the reigning cultural background and the attributes given to the totem by that specific culture.

In the second, pertaining mostly to Native American beliefs, the totem usually reveals itself at a certain time of the year and after certain shamanist ritualism is undergone; in these cases it may suffice that the person literally secludes themselves in some quiet area in the wilderness and meditates upon their life, until such a spirit appears in literal form- at other times the spirit may affect their subconscious and reveal itself in dreams (and the practice of dream interpretation is at least loosely paired with the concept of totems.) The totemic spirit will reveal itself, and is then adopted as a patron spirit- in these cases, the attributes are of Native source, and thus it may be helpful for individuals to speak with an actual tribe about the topic (most tribal groups are willing to teach such materials to outsiders as long as their beliefs are not disrespected, especially if the individual has some Native ancestry, although proving this to be the case can be difficult.)

In the third, the animal totem or ancestral spirit will reveal itself unannounced and usually in the form of a dream,

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and no ritual has been used at all- the spirit will simply make its presence known to an individual. While these revelations may be random, I have to believe that some sort of system governs these events, possibly in the form of the person "needing" such guidance severely enough that the spirit chooses not to wait for them to conduct otherwise proper ritualism. These events, it seems, are rare in some groups, common in others, and more frequent in cultures where such totemic or naturist reverence is more abundant (and we can interpret this as a psychological manifestation and thus governed by logic, or as a natural manifestation governed by the occult.)

In the fourth and final, as found among some new age groups, a supposedly "inspired" spiritualist will give others in their order animal guides, or they will choose animal guides on their own; this, to me, is the least historically genuine practice of the four, and until I am convinced of its veracity I must label it quack occultism.

It doesn't seem that there exists a culture in the world today that doesn't practice some form of totemic reverence, or that never did in the past, and as such it seems likely that nobody should be deprived of the ability to at least attempt to find their own spirit guide.

DEVIL WORSHIP (DEMONOLATRY)

Demonolatry can be somewhat misunderstood in the occult and by those outside of its practices- asking multiple demonolaters about the subject can result in different explanations of what it actually means (because it seems to have fractured into several slightly different subschools.) In a general sense, we can define it as practices related to the worship of or partnership with or friendly relations with demonic forces; demons being here regarded more as cosmic agents or

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gods/demigods than directly malevolent forces. (Indeed, pagan deities have had their names robbed by grimoires in the past.)

Demonolatry regards the traditional commanding of spirits as a form of disrespect, either out of reverent worship towards, or friendship with, forces traditionally considered demonic by Abrahamic paths. In a way, these practices are to traditional magickal rituals as evocation in its modern form is to prayers created centuries ago- in both cases, the move has been away from commanding spiritual entities, and towards requesting their friendship, intercession, protection, or power.

Even some Abrahamists themselves (myself included during my years as a devout Christian!) may begin to question exactly why such fear surrounds demons and demonic forces- indeed, the bible itself says relatively little on the subject, except that such spirits occasionally possessed people and that Jesus and various other figures supposedly possessed the capability to remove them. Indeed the Pharisees (if we take the gospels at face value and assume their veracity to a greater extent than we might otherwise do) when they proclaim Jesus to be commanding spirits because he himself was a conjurer and sorcerer, may have actually been correct- it is surely the case, that one can appeal to a demonic force higher than or more powerful than another, in order to placate or destroy the lesser power. This I believe is true, regardless of the concerns of some with such a blanket statement, and even the renaissance era ceremonial texts such as the Keys of Solomon take great care in their detail towards the demonic hierarchy and subordinate demonic forces as well as angelic ones to one another in a sort of tiered system.

In fact we should perhaps realize that even late Renaissance and early Victorian era scholars intrinsically involved in the study of the occult (even those who lived during the burning times) sometimes voiced their opinion that a lot of

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the material in then-infamous grimoires was nonsense; in many cases these materials contradicted themselves, or other grimoires, and sometimes both, or contradicted then-reigning theological beliefs within christendom and were thus considered at worst mumbo jumbo of a Satanic but entirely powerless nature.

We need to realize that although medieval and Renaissance era citizens tended to be fairly low on the literacy scale and had little to no time to read anyways, the alchemists, sorcerers, some of the nobility, and surely almost all monks and priests were well educated by this time period, at least as early as Charlemagne, who was of course one of the first and few royal leaders who ever made an effort to learn to read and write. Surely, the logical and mystic contradictions in some of the dubiously authored occult texts of the time were known to these individuals, and they merely forgot or neglected to tell the citizens, who centuries later became more literate and took them seriously- the Vatican alone probably contains thousands of grimoires from this period and periods even older, that it has never allowed to be seen by the public; the literary volumes there must be priceless.

Certainly those that worship or forge partnerships with demonic forces are not doing so merely in symbolic form- it can only be from an intelligent and external source that any such ritualism or practice could possibly work; in fact it might be the most direct external magick outside of the pantheons of Abrahamism with their angels, deities, and other cosmic phenomena and beings.

Devil worship is further misunderstood because of the concepts introduced into public consciousness in the Satanic Panic era which lasted roughly from the early 1980s until the mid 1990s in the United States, with associated moral panic in

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the United Kingdom, Australia, and which has persisted even into modernity in places like South Africa where the church has introduced only the most insane of superstitions regarding witchery. Indeed, while Africans in the Ivory Coast frequently enjoy researching and practicing black magick and demonolatry (and I have had perhaps hundreds of Nigerians, Ghanains, and other groups ask me about such things personally) in the more Southern regions, native religious forces and occultism have become taboo subjects- perhaps the tribes originally from this region feared magick, while those in the Ivory Coast never saw it as particularly problematic- it is true that shaman and witches are commonly found in the area, consulted even for routine medical reasons.

Thus we are left with the extraordinarily bizarre situation where western nations experiencing a decline in Abrahamic ideology and a move towards secularism are actually more superstitious on the topic of occultism and demons than even parts of the deep third world where the Catholic church in particular exercises control that is just short of open theocracy. Yet in the latter case, perhaps it is a fear of occult reprisal that prevents the theocratic banning of black magick and tribal witchcraft, as well as the adaptation of purely European and Indo-Aryan demonic and pagan figures into the local pantheons; and this doesn't even begin to account for thousands of semitic and Arabic demons and forces also adopted by the local tribes.

Indeed the occult, and its more authentic demonolatry-driven view of cosmic entities, seems to be spreading rapidly; but unlike abrahamism which spread mostly by conquest, fire, and sword, the occult is spreading out through the world on the internet and through completely passive means, without any coercion whatsoever- never have we heard of groups of black robed witches forcing christians to convert at the point of a sword.

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One goal of the demonic community that I have not seen openly expressed by most is attempts to fuse these practices with either other forms of the occult or with the forces of science in an attempt to fuse the spirit world with the physical one; one reigning theory at least within fringe science (with some connections to quantum and string theory) is that our existence is essentially a vibration and that what we recognize as the spirit world is merely a slightly different vibration, with us tuned in to a sort of physical radio station only we experience, because we're part and parcel of the same vibration. If this is the case it seems likely that it would be possible to at least locally, temporarily affect these vibrations, opening portals to other realms of existence (although doing so, according to some theories, could destabilize the fabric of existence, wiping out the universe or at least the planet.)

All of those theories aside however, demonolatry becomes far more easy to understand when it is regarded as not being entirely different from any other form of worship- in fact, any theory within abrahamism as to the role of their deity and the congregants venerating it can be loosely applied to demonolatry. For example, some groups see their spirits or deities as divinely important, and thus worship them literally, whereas others regard these same forces as fundamentally uninterested in being worshiped, and far more interested in pacts and partnerships, or in some cases an actual relationship with human beings (with the reasons thereof being speculative in some cases.)

When encyclopedias or definitions list demonolatry solely as a form of devil worship it appears they are wrong; I've had actual demonolaters (at least self proclaimed) state that the demon is more of a friend than a god to them- a force or being they can literally see and feel, or in other cases at least sense with their minds' eye, in a more subconscious manner. I am inclined to believe this is the case for two reasons- firstly that it

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would be done to set it apart from abrahamic practices of a similar nature which are more routinely worshipful, and second because upon assuming such demons literally exist, it would be an oversimplification to regard them as unable to desire friendship of some sort.

Any intelligent spiritual being, in fact, should by definition be capable of such a feat, if not overtly interested in doing so; perhaps this gives rise to the pagan story in Greece of how the Greeks successfully fooled the gods into accepting innards as a sacrifice, by hiding the good meat under a pile of bones after being instructed to make two piles, one which their gods would choose to be a perpetual sacrificial offering. Mythology aside, if taken literally it would seem these deities are not themselves omniscient, as is claimed by the abrahamists.

The world unfortunately has a notable lack of inexpensive and/or easily obtained texts dealing with such subjects as demonolatry, partly because they tend to be released as grimoires or as limited editions of great price, and probably also because of the prevalence of christianized texts on the subject which are in many cases already well established and aged, and which are easily obtained by those interested in the topic- it is for these reasons that the average person in the western world still sees demons solely as evil beings living in Hellfire, ruled over by a being which himself is a deity (Satan) albeit one not worshiped by those who literally believe in such a figure.

I can give little in the way of instruction on this particular topic, specifically because there are multiple sub schools of thought within such groups, which sometimes regard one another's practices as either impotent or outright dangerous, and as such would caution the reader to proceed with care and due study should they choose to investigate demonolatry

further.

MORE TOPICS

I. THE HINDU PANTHEON AS BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

Within Hinduism there is an interesting interplay between the internal and external. We are all aware that the West typically regards Hinduism as a polytheistic system- that is, that it contains multiple deities. This is true. It is also true that Hinduism is a monotheism with only one deity. How is this possible?

The same internal-external interplay at work in so many other aspects of occultism is also at work here. It is quite simple and requires relatively little depth to understand. The sole, singular creative force of all eternity merely partitioned itself into different aspects which became physically separated from one another, to the point at which they were able to interact, breed, fight, speak with one another, and seem fully separate. It is almost a statement on humans as well, further partitioned but part of this one cosmic whole.

We might say that the same basic premise works within christiandom with the trinity- the godhead, the creator that is, partitioned off segments of itself to craft the "holy ghost" and his own son, which is separate from physically, but paired to spiritually, the godhead. At least this is the technical reigning philosophy within the majority of christian groups (many early christians saw their Jesus as a philosopher or sorcerer or a demigod born of man, rather than a manifested partition of the godhead.)

II. MANS OWN EXTERNALIZATIONS

In an amusing sense, man has externalized his own spiritual systems and thoughts while claiming that the ethos behind such acts was external to himself; that is, man has externalized his internal desire and inspiration while claiming that a force not of his own crafting was responsible for the same.

We see no better example of this than in the architecture of many churches and temples; many Gothic churches are essentially built in the figure of a cross- this was not a function of efficiency but was performed by christian adherents at the time to reflect the going philosophy of the deity they worshiped. They claimed that reflecting the state of the heavenly was a good idea- but the reflection they created was entirely of their own interpretation of selectively canonized dogma- in essence, man had to, at the time, choose what the prime philosophy would be to determine what the heavenly was in order to reflect it in building design.

This is not merely the case within christiandom. In Eastern spiritual circles great attempts are made to emulate various divine or spiritual principles within landscaping, not just with the building of spiritual centers or worship or meditation. Man has a tendency to reflect basic concepts not just within the design of any single building but also in the way in which buildings are arranged as well. Thus we have the centralizing system of European building (in which major roads tend to converge at points along various angles) and the grid system of classical antiquity emulated as well in the United States; there is also the expanding circular system which for example was used in many primitive societies, notably in Caribbean cultures of the late antiquated period; that these designs would have been woefully inefficient had their population risen significantly is of

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note here; the absence of significant density made the circular design efficient enough- perhaps best for their needs, since trash could be deposited beyond the perimeter and communal gatherings held within the circumference.

III: MANS PROJECTION

As technology has increased over time man has almost invariably asked himself "how can I alter the external with this?" Whether it is to reflect some force or for his own convenience, this has been an ongoing evolutionary trait of mankind for his entire recorded history.

Man's dreams, aspirations, and desires, are all externalized when the means arise for him to do so. He even externalizes the dream in a less real and less tangible form through writing books and making songs and movies; science fiction, of course, as I have said, often later becomes science fact, as formerly top-rung technology is displaced and made antiquated by new arrivals to the technological world. In the last twenty years that I have witnessed, so much technological change has arisen that I almost believe those who said we would soon possess flying cars and floating towns and domestic robots were fundamentally correct and just undershot the date at which such things would occur.

This is the ultimate external projection; the very essence of man's dreams made tangible over time as he seeks not only to worship or venerate some external force but to make himself, it seems, into a god in the most literal sense. Perhaps he will create, some day, life that will do the same and the entire confusing and mentally damaging cycle will renew itself elsewhere with a new species.

"Categorizing the Occult" is a system by which many aspects of human ritualism and practice can be set apart from one another on the basis of the internalization and externalization of occult or similar forces. Speaking of shamanism, mantras, invocation, exorcism, devil worship, totems, and much more, it delves into the subject and then fuses these two broad spectra of esoteric practice.

Through this system of thought man's aspirations, hopes, and rites, can be detailed in some degree of depth based solely upon this selfsame system alone.

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